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ABSTRACT

This guide to improving cross-cultural communication is the second part of a four-part series addressing the essential characteristics of effective instruction that have a positive impact on the academic achievement of Black and Hispanic students. Since schools tend to reflect the norms and values of the majority culture, cultural misunderstandings often have a negative effect on a minority student's academic performance. The following topics are discussed: (1) cultural diversity and cross-cultural communication issues in schools; (2) discovering the characteristics of other cultures; (3) cultural differences in discourse; (4) using cross-cultural communication to improve interpersonal relationships; (5) teaching standard English to speakers of nonstandard English dialects, including implementation of Standard English as a Second Dialect (SESD) programs; (6) cultural bias in tests and assessment procedures; and (7) the effect of cultural and communicative incongruities on discipline. The following tables are included: (1) a quiz about culture, communication, and language; (2) questions to ask about culture; (3) varieties of nonstandard American English; (4) communication contrasts among some African Americans and some Anglo Americans; (5) classroom problems arising from culture and communication conflicts; and (6) sources of bias in tests and testing procedures. The following materials are appended: (1) an abstract of the philosophy and assumptions of the Richmond (California) Standard English Program; (2) the attributes of field-independent and field-dependent cognitive styles; (3) information sources on SESD programs; and (4) a 34-item bibliography. (FMW)

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Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education

Revised Edition

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Learning to Persist/Persisting to Learn

Cross-Cultural Communication:
An Essential Dimension of
Effective Education

Improving Black Student Achievement
By Enhancing Students' Self-Image

Learning Styles:
The Joy of Diversity

MID-ATLANTIC EQUITY CENTER SERIES

Dedicated to the children
and future leaders of
the communication age
and the global society

Foreword

The academic underachievement of African American and Hispanic students is documented by the large gap between standardized test scores of minority and majority students and by the continued high rate of suspension and dropout among African American and Hispanic teenagers. This underachievement of a large and growing segment of our population is nothing short of a national crisis.

By the year 2010, African Americans and Hispanics will comprise approximately 30 percent of our population. Labor force projections indicate a severe decline in the number of blue-collar jobs and a substantial increase in jobs that require high levels of technical skill. Given this economic picture, the crisis of underachieving minority students will become a central issue in determining our nation's economic survival. We can envision a large unemployed segment of the population and, simultaneously, a severe labor shortage in numerous highly skilled occupations. It is doubtful the United States can maintain world leadership under these conditions. As Americans and in our roles as educators, we must work together to ensure that equitable opportunities exist for all students. Minority children, like all children, should be given the opportunity to succeed.

Many factors have been cited for the underachievement of African American and Hispanic students, including economics, parents, community and the environment. The Effective Schools Research makes it clear that whatever influence is exerted by these factors, schools can make a difference. Researchers who study effective schools have found schools serving lower-income African American and Hispanic neighborhoods where students' performance on standardized tests is average or above. While we may not be able to control other variables, evidence indicates that schools can have a significant impact on minority students' academic performance.

With this in mind, researchers have analyzed characteristics of effective school districts, school buildings, classrooms and teachers. They have also outlined effective instructional strategies. The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center has designed this publication series to address four essential characteristics of effective instruction identified by these researchers, including:

(1) teaching students to persist in their learning in *Learning to Persist/Persisting to Learn;*
(2) understanding cultural diversity and its importance in the classroom in *Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education;*
(3) helping African American students to build positive academic self-concepts in *Improving Black Student Achievement By Enhancing Students' Self-Image;* and

(4) incorporating learning-style differences into curriculum and instruction in *Learning Styles: The Joy of Diversity*.

Both *Learning to Persist/Persisting to Learn* and *Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education* were first published by the Mid-Atlantic Center for Race Equity but are now available from the Mid-Atlantic Equity Center.

Learning to Persist/Persisting to Learn, the first in the series, will assist teachers in improving the academic self-concept of minority students by helping teachers: (1) to understand why some students fail to successfully complete a task; (2) to identify non-persisting students; and (3) to pinpoint curriculum and instructional strategies that can help students to learn to persist. Persistence is a learned behavior, and students from lower-income families are more likely than their middle-income counterparts to observe adults who lack control of their environment and to view luck or chance as a more significant factor in success than effort or persistence. *Learning to Persist/Persisting to Learn* helps teachers teach students to cope with adversity and to persist in the successful completion of a task.

Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education discusses cultural differences that can lead to communication problems in the classroom and suggests behaviors that affirm rather than devalue a minority student's culture. Since our educational institutions tend to reflect the norms and values of the majority culture, cultural misunderstandings often have a negative effect on a minority student's academic performance. *Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education* assists teachers to recognize and utilize student diversity in ways that enhance academic identity.

Improving Black Student Achievement By Enhancing Students' Self-Image helps teachers to better understand the factors that contribute to a positive self-image for African American students and to design and implement instructional strategies that will enhance African American students' academic self-concept. While a positive academic identity is important for all students, it is a particularly critical issue for underachieving African American students.

Learning Styles: The Joy of Diversity stresses the importance of recognizing differences in learning styles and proposes curricular and instructional strategies for underachieving females and minority students that take those differences into account.

We hope that you will find this pamphlet series helpful in your efforts to increase the academic achievement of African American and Hispanic students. We look forward to your comments on our publications.

Sheryl Denbo, Ph.D, Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Equity Center

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I
Introduction

Everything that occurs within a school, and especially in the classroom, involves communication, the act of sharing information. Sometimes communication involves the use of oral or written **verbal** symbols. On other occasions, communication involves various types of **nonverbal** symbols, including body language.

Communication is the medium for instruction, assessment, interpersonal relationships, group interactions, parent and community relations and counseling. Most behavior problems in schools, and their resolutions, involve some type of communication. In sum, communication permeates education.

Communication is culture bound. The way an individual communicates emanates from his or her culture. Of course, a person may know more than one culture or may be competent in a combination of cultures. Nonetheless, one basic truth prevails: communication is a product of culture.

Students with different cultural norms are at risk if teachers have little knowledge, sensitivity or appreciation of the diversity in communication styles. Such teachers may perceive differences as problems and respond to students' diversity with negative attitudes, low expectations and culturally inappropriate teaching and assessment procedures. Culturally and communicatively diverse students, in turn, may respond with low self-concepts and low academic achievement to a school climate they perceive as hostile. The result is reflected in these students' excessive placements in special education, reduced placements in talented and gifted programs and high suspension rates.

Cultural Diversity in America

The United States is currently experiencing radical demographic shifts which are changing the colors — and the cultures — of its citizenry. According to recent statistics, one American in four currently defines himself or herself as non-white. By the year 2010, because of higher birth rates and immigration trends, non-whites are expected to constitute more than one-third of the American people, and upwards of 50 percent of its school aged population. By the year 2050, the average U.S. resident will trace his or her descent to Africa, Asia, the Hispanic world, the Pacific Islands, the Middle East — almost anywhere but white Europe.

As diversity increases in our nation's schools, teachers, administrators and other education personnel will be challenged increasingly to become more knowledgeable about the assumptions, attributes, and norms of a range of cultures. These challenges will occur in every dimension of school life — from the curriculum to the communication that occurs in classrooms. As a result, the issue of cultural diversity will, by necessity, have to be taken into account if effective education is to be a reality in our nation's schools.

The Neglect of Cross-Cultural Communication Issues in Schools

The failure of many schools to take cross-cultural communication issues into account can contribute to school related problems experienced by specific groups of children. The current crisis of African American males in many of the nation's schools demonstrates this point.

According to recent statistics, the percentage of African American males who graduate from high school has *decreased* since the mid-1970's. A similar trend exists for the percentage who go on to college. In 1989, 34 percent of young African American males attended less than four years of high school and only 11 percent attended four years of college or more. In 1990, one out of four (23%) African American males ages 20-29 were in the criminal system, while only 6% of white males and 10% of Hispanic males were in the system.

Within many schools, it is a well-documented fact that African American males are disproportionately placed in special education and speech-language pathology programs, and are more likely to be recipients of disciplinary actions.

Recent research has shown that language and communication norms among African American males, particularly those of lower socioeconomic status, are related, at least in part, to these problems. For example, lower SES African American males are likely to see the speaking of ethnically based English vernaculars, and the use of urban argots, to be markers of masculinity and defiance of white standards.

While adherence to ethnic vernaculars allows validation to be achieved within the African American male peerage, their employment within the school setting virtually guarantees academic problems and, sometimes, social problems. When students' communication norms conflict with the school's communication norms, erosion of academic performance and acceptable classroom behavior frequently follows. Thus, while the use of Black vernacular speech by African American males may be perceived as "fresh" by peers, it is viewed by teachers, all too often *and incorrectly*, as indicators of a slow learning, violent, undisciplined, and obnoxious individual.

In order to address these issues, schools must build into their curricula (particularly in the language arts area) the notion that there is a time and place for all language. In this way, respect can be given to students' culturally based vernaculars when used in informal, non-academic activities, while teaching them the necessity and validity of the school's language in formal academic settings. Indeed, the creative teacher uses the vernacular linguisitic system for contrastive analysis during the process of teaching standard English. This approach encourages the African American male to adapt a bidialectal approach to language use. Techniques for implementing these approaches to instruction are discussed elsewhere in this booklet.

In addition, the school *must* provide examples of strong male images who are able to alternately speak the school's language or the vernacular language, as necessary. Jesse Jackson, Spike Lee and Arsenio Hall represent good examples of highly successful and popular African American males who can serve as positive role models for young students, and who demonstrate competence in speaking the standard language required in formal situations as well as the community language when required.

Though the condition of the African American male has been described in detail, many of the concepts presented in this publication can be applied to all culturally diverse groups.

Self-Assessment on Communication and Culture

The quiz presented in Table I on page 4 assesses a person's knowledge of the relationships among culture, communication and language. Before reading further, you may want to take this test.

TABLE I
What Do I Know About Culture, Communication and Language?

Directions: Circle A for each statement with which you agree or D for each statement with which you disagree.

A D 1. One's culture and one's race are usually one and the same.

A D 2. Culture consists exclusively of a group's art, music, dance, food, language and dress.

A D 3. Cultural groups are generally mutually exclusive of one another.

A D 4. Cultural traits tend to have a genetic base.

A D 5. In general, people who speak the same language are members of the same cultural group.

A D 6. People are usually aware of all of the rules of their culture.

A D 7. Culture is expressed exclusively by one's verbal behavior.

A D 8. The only significant components of one's oral language are vocabulary and rules on pronunciation and grammar.

A D 9. Standard English is the correct way to speak at all times.

A D 10. There are universal norms for acceptable communicative behavior within the United States.

A D 11. If a student violates the school's cultural or communicative norms, it is almost always an act of defiance.

A D 12. In general, speaking a nonstandard dialect suggests low cognitive development.

A D 13. Standard English has more and better structures than other varieties of English.

A D 14. Most standardized tests are based on rules of English used by individuals in all linguistic groups.

A D 15. Standard English is White English.

A D 16. In general, students from poor families do not communicate as well as those from middle-class families.

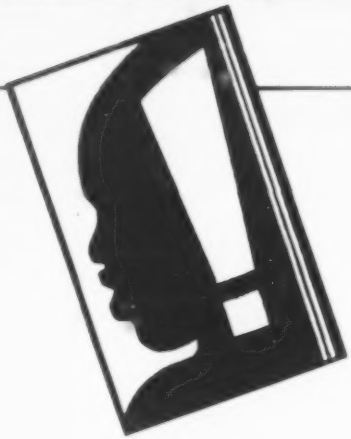
A D 17. In general, African American students do not communicate as well as White students.

A D 18. Parents who do not speak standard English should avoid talking to their children to prevent them from developing poor speech habits.

A D 19. If students are to learn standard English, they must unlearn any other variety of English that they speak.

A D 20. African American English is by definition a nonstandard variety of English.

ANSWERS: Each statement reflects a common myth or stereotype pertaining to communication or culture. Therefore, you should have disagreed with each one.



II
Discovering Characteristics Of Other Cultures

When teachers ask "How can I learn about culture X?", all too often teachers are discouraged to learn that there is no comprehensive book (or list) available on culture X.

The lack of reading matter on various cultures is, in some ways, a blessing, since knowledge of other cultures is better acquired by experience than by study. Thus, teachers should plan to experience cultures different from their own, particularly the cultures represented in their schools and classrooms. To be valid, these experiences should incorporate a few basic principles and discovery techniques.

As you begin to discover the characteristics of other cultures, remember that cultures vary internally and are changeable. There are usually many cultural differences within a single race or nationality. It will be useful to keep the following principles in mind:

- Firsthand experience is necessary to understand many subtleties of any culture.
- Feelings of apprehension, loneliness or lack of confidence are common when visiting and experiencing another culture.
- Differences between cultures are often experienced as threatening.
- What is logical and important in a particular culture may seem irrational and unimportant to an outsider.
- In describing another culture, people tend to stress the differences and overlook the similarities.
- Stereotyping due to generalizing may be inevitable among those who lack frequent contact with another culture.

- Personal observations of others about another culture should be regarded with skepticism.
- Many cultures often exist within a single race, language group, religion or nationality, differentiated by age, gender, socioeconomic status, education, and exposure to other cultures.
- All cultures have internal variations.
- Cultural awareness varies among individuals.
- One's own sense of cultural identity often is not evident until one encounters another culture.
- Cultures are continually evolving.
- Understanding another culture is a continuous process.
- One should understand the language of a culture to best understand that culture.

An understanding of these principles can help you to become a more insightful observer of other cultures.

Saville-Troike (1978) suggests a specific set of questions to guide those who seek to understand another culture. Some of her questions are presented in Table II below. They can provide the basis for interesting, informative and stimulating discussions among teachers, students, administrators and parents.

TABLE II
Questions to Ask About Culture

Family Structure

Who is considered to belong in the family?
What are the rights, roles and responsibilities of the members?

Life Cycle

What are the important stages, periods and transitions in life?
What behaviors are inappropriate or unacceptable for children at various ages?

Roles

What roles are available to whom?
How are roles acquired?

Interpersonal Relationships

How do people greet each other?
Who may disagree with whom?
How are insults expressed?

Communication

What languages and dialects are spoken?
What are the characteristics of speaking "well"?
What roles, attitudes and personality traits are associated with particular aspects of verbal and nonverbal behavior?

Decorum and Discipline

How do people behave at home and in public?
What means of discipline are used?

Religion

What religious roles and authority are recognized?
What should an outsider not know or acknowledge knowing?

Health and Hygiene

How are illness and death explained?
How are specific illnesses treated?

Food

What is eaten, in what order and how often?
What are the rules for table manners, including offering foods, handling foods and discarding foods?

Holidays and Celebrations

What holidays are observed? For what purposes?
Which holidays are important for children?
What cultural values are instilled in children during the holidays?

Dress and Personal Appearance

What significance does dress have for social identity?
What is the concept and value of beauty and attractiveness?

Values

What traits and attributes in oneself or others are important? Undesirable?
What attributes in the world are important? Undesirable?

History and Traditions

How are history and tradition passed on to the young?
How do cultural understandings of history differ from "scientific" facts or literate history?

Education

What are the purposes of education?
What kinds of learning are favored?
What teaching and learning methods are used in the home?
What are parental expectations for boys versus girls?

Work and Play

What behaviors are considered "work"? "Play"?
What kinds of work are prestigious? Why?

Time and Space

What is considered "on time"?
What is the importance of punctuality?
How important is speed of performance?
How are groups organized spatially by age, gender and role?

Natural Phenomena

Who or what is responsible for rain, thunder, floods and hurricanes?
Are behavioral taboos associated with natural phenomena?

Pets and Animals

Which animals are valued and for what reasons?
What animals are considered appropriate as pets? Inappropriate?

Art and Music

What forms of art and music are most highly valued?
What forms of art and music are considered appropriate for children to perform or appreciate?

Expectations and Aspirations

Do parents expect and desire assimilation of children to the dominant culture, language or dialect?
What cultural values are expected to be maintained despite the degree of formal education?

(From Saville-Troike, M. *A Guide to Culture in the Classroom*. Rosslyn, VA: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1978.)

III
Culture, Communication And Language

Now that your "cultural eye" has been sharpened, let us look at how culture influences students' language skills and their learning of standard English, the language of education.

The concept of **communicative competence** (Hymes, 1962), based on one's knowledge of the rules of language structure and language use within a given culture, will be useful.

A major responsibility of teachers at all grade levels is to teach the language and communication skills needed for academic success, and for career and social mobility. Many students come from cultures which use different, though valid, communication and language systems from what is considered "normal" in the classroom.

The study of sociolinguistics can help us understand different systems as a means of improving the quality of our instruction in language and the communication arts.

Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguists examine social and cultural influences on language behavior. Among the most important concepts to emerge are those relating to dialects and language standards.

Sociolinguists have documented the presence of dialects in every language. These dialects, all of which are legitimate, are associated with educational, economic, social and historical conditions. To linguists, the word "dialect" refers to a way of speaking a language, and not to an incorrect way of speaking a language.

While all dialects of a given language are linguistically legitimate, some achieve social prestige. In literate, economically developed societies, the dialect spoken by those with the most formal education,

the highest socioeconomic status and the greatest degree of political power tends to acquire the greatest social prestige. Typically, it becomes the standard for the culture, for writing and for education.

Standard dialects also provide a medium through which persons from different linguistic backgrounds can communicate with one another. Social and regional variations may exist within standard dialects as long as they conform to specified linguistic rules, largely grammatical in nature. Standard English, therefore, should not be considered "Northern English" or "White English," since it is spoken, in one form or another, in all parts of the United States and by some members of all racial and cultural groups.

At the other end of the social spectrum, so-called nonstandard dialects are generally spoken by the "have-nots:" the powerless, the less educated, the less economically well-off and the less socially prominent. While legitimate linguistically, these dialects tend to be unacceptable to the "haves" of society.

In American English, nonstandard dialects exist within all racial, ethnic and regional groups (see Table III below). Each dialect is a product of distinct social, historical, cultural and educational factors. All are legitimate in that they represent the concepts, needs and intentions of their speakers.

TABLE III
Some Varieties of Nonstandard American English

Appalachian English
"He just kept a-begging and a-crying and a-wanting to go out." (He persisted in begging, crying and wanting to leave.)

Athabascan English (Alaska)
"Most time we play games." (Most of the time we play games.)

African American English Vernacular
"He be scared, but I be brave." (He is usually scared, but I am usually brave.)

General American Nonstandard English
"Don't nobody want none." (Nobody wants any.)

Keaukaha English (Hawaii)
"I no can place that name." (I cannot place that name.)

New York City Nonstandard English
"She's a good cook, your mother." (Your mother is a good cook.)

Southern American Nonstandard English
"I mon' rest." (I am going to rest.)

Spanish-Influenced English
"Carol left yesterday. I think is coming back tomorrows." (Carol left yesterday. I think she is coming back tomorrow.)

For a variety of reasons, including negative public attitudes and inadequate teaching models, nonstandard English speakers often do not

effectively learn standard English in school. Without competence in standard English, students will fail academically and face diminished career, social and life options. Many students who do learn standard English do so at a great price: devaluation or rejection of their home or community dialect. When competence in standard English is coupled with rejection of one's own home or community dialect, it may lead to serious psychological and identity problems (Chambers, 1983).

In the United States, the schools' failure to teach standard English is reflected in the poor performance of nonstandard English speakers on achievement, aptitude and diagnostic tests. Perhaps the most alarming evidence of this failure is the low performance of nonstandard English speakers on tests used to place students in remedial or gifted programs. Virtually all of these tests presume competence in standard English (Oakland, 1977).

Many African American children, usually from working-class homes or communities, speak a nonstandard variety of English. This variety, often referred to as Black English Vernacular, is thought by many sociolinguists to reflect African influences on American English, and is reinforced by social isolation, segregation and group identity.

Cultural Differences in Discourse

In addition to differences in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical structures among cultural groups, variations also exist in the rules for general discourse in oral communication, covering such specific acts as narratives and conversation.

In communicating with one another, teachers and students naturally will follow the assumptions and rules governing discourse within their respective cultures. Discourse rules govern such aspects of communication as:

- Opening or closing conversations;
- Taking turns during conversations;
- Interrupting;
- Using silence as a communicative device;
- Knowing appropriate topics of conversation;
- Interjecting humor at appropriate times;
- Using nonverbal behavior;
- Expressing laughter as a communicative device;
- Knowing the appropriate amount of speech to be used by participants; and
- Sequencing of elements during discourse.

With respect to narratives, Gee (1985) claims that story-telling during sharing time in the early school years helps to provide students the foundation for reading and writing instruction in later grades. Both he and Michaels (1981) report that schools and teachers prefer linear, single-topic story-telling, the style that is compatible with strategies encountered in reading and writing activities.

These topic-centered stories are characterized by tightly structured sentences that reflect on a single or small set of highly related topics. The speaker presumes little shared knowledge with listeners. Topic centered stories, therefore, tend to be very explicit and contain great detail, emphasizing more telling than showing. Topic centered stories are thought by some to be associated with the field independent cognitive style.

Gee and Michaels note further that many working-class children, particularly those from oral cultures, tend to prefer a topic-associating narrative style. These story-tellers presume a shared knowledge with the audience, do more showing than telling and imply linkages among a wide range of topics which need not be presented in temporal sequence. Topic associating narrative style is thought by some to be associated with the field dependent cognitive style.

While both narrative styles provide meaningful ways for children to talk about their experiences and realities, research shows that students who tell topic-associating stories tend to be called on less and interrupted more often than do children who tell topic-centered stories (Michaels, 1981). They also tend to be wrongly considered disorganized or poor thinkers. Finally, they are more likely to be erroneously referred for psychological assessments or placed in special education.

Examples of Cultural and Communicative Tendencies

In this section, we will present examples of cultural and communicative tendencies observable among African American and white students from several cultural groups in the United States. Tendencies are not universal. In order to avoid generalizations and stereotypes about cultural groups, variations **within** cultures must always be considered. Highly educated people of a given cultural group are less likely to reveal indigenous language and communication patterns than less educated persons. Moreover, many people communicate in ways influenced by other cultures.

Based on a review of literature and anecdotal reports, Taylor (1985) has listed verbal and nonverbal communication styles of working-class African Americans as they contrast with those of Anglo Americans and middle-class persons of other ethnic groups. Some of these characteristics are presented in Table IV on pages 13-14. Similar comparisons may be made between other cultural groups in the "typical" American classroom.

Unfamiliarity with cultural communication differences can lead to misinterpretation, misunderstanding and even unintentional insult. For example, the African American student who shows little reserve in stating his or her feelings may be misperceived as hostile, or perhaps as dangerous. The student, meanwhile, may see himself or herself as an honest person willing to share feelings as a necessary first step in resolving problems.

Similarly, the African American student who looks away from speakers during conversation may be erroneously perceived as showing disrespect or not paying attention. The African American student who freely states his or her position to the teacher may be perceived as challenging the teacher's authority when the student may be demonstrating honesty and pride in the value of his or her opinion.

Teachers, like all human beings, have their own expectations about communicative behavior. The teacher should 1) recognize any incongruencies that may exist between his or her expectations and those of the child; 2) make certain that behavioral norms in the classroom are sufficiently broad to embrace all cultural groups; and 3) teach the rules of standard American culture and the reasons for them.

Have you witnessed any of the behaviors identified in Table IV? How did you interpret what you saw? Which behaviors do you find represented in your classes? What characteristics could you add to the list from other cultural groups? What in-group variations have you observed?

TABLE IV
Examples of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Contrasts Among Some African Americans and Some Anglo Americans

Some African Americans	Some Anglo Americans
Hats and sunglasses may be considered by men as adornments much like jewelry and may be worn indoors.	Hats and sunglasses are considered utilitarian by men and as outerwear to be removed indoors.
Touching another's hair is generally considered offensive.	Touching another's hair is a sign of affection.
Asking personal questions of a person met for the first time may be seen as improper and intrusive.	Inquiring about jobs, family and so forth of someone one has met for the first time is seen as friendly.
Use of direct questions is sometimes considered harassment, e.g., asking when something will be finished is like rushing that person to finish.	Use of direct questions for personal information is permissible.
"Breaking in" during conversation by participants is usually tolerated. Competition for the floor is granted to the person who is most assertive.	Rules on taking turns in conversation dictate that one person has the floor at a time until all of his or her points are made.
Conversations are regarded as private between the recognized participants; "butting in" may be seen as eavesdropping and not tolerated.	Adding points of information or insights to a conversation in which one is not engaged is sometimes seen as helpful.

Some African Americans	Some Anglo Americans
The term "you people" is typically seen as pejorative and racist.	The term "you people" is tolerated.
Listeners are expected to avert eyes to indicate respect and attention.	Listeners are expected to look at a speaker directly to indicate respect and attention.
Speakers are expected to look at listeners directly in the eye.	Speakers are expected to avert eyes, especially in informal speaking situations.
Confederate flags and Black lawn ornaments are considered offensive and racist.	Symbols of the Old South, such as confederate flags and Black lawn ornaments, are considered acceptable by many.
Purposely including a minority person in group activities is seen as tokenism.	Including a minority person in group activities is seen as democratic.
Adoption of dance patterns or music of another cultural group is suspect or considered offensive.	Adoption of dance patterns or music of another cultural group is seen as a free and desirable exchange.
Talking "Black" by outsiders without authorization is an insult.	Borrowing of language forms from another group is permissible and encouraged.
Showing emotions during conflict is perceived as honesty and as the first step toward the resolution of a problem.	Showing emotions during conflict is perceived as the beginning of a "fight" and an interference to conflict resolution.

The Significance of Culture-Based Communicative Behavior in School

A variety of cross-cultural communication problems can arise in school, and it is important that teachers not automatically blame the student or the student's family or culture. Problems often result from misunderstandings or value conflicts between teachers and students who are obeying different culturally based communication rules. Some common problems linked to cultural and communicative diversity are presented in Table V on the next page.

TABLE V
Problems That May Result From Culture and Communication Conflicts in the Classroom

Student Characteristics	Some Examples of Inappropriate Responses	Some Examples of Possible Impact on Student
Diverse Cultural Assumptions	■ Negative attitudes towards dialect variation	■ Lowered self-image
	■ Lower student expectations	■ Lowered achievement and excessive special education placements
	■ Excessive interruptions	■ Low student participation; disproportionately low placement in talented and gifted programs
Diverse Verbal Behavior	■ Diversity ignored in teaching process	■ Lowered self-expectations
	■ Insufficient attention to student speech	■ Excessive speech/language therapy placements
Diverse Nonverbal Behavior	■ Frequent misunderstandings and misinterpretations of student	■ Lowered achievement in oral standard English
	■ Perception of student as disorganized	■ Lowered achievement and academic self-concept
Diverse Story-Telling and Conversational Rules	■ Perception of student as poor thinker	■ Perception of frequent social insults (unintentional) from teachers and other students
	■ Perception of communication differences as discipline problem	■ Frequent misunderstandings and misinterpretations from school personnel and other students
	■ Perception of communication differences as social insults (unintentional)	■ Perception of negative school climate
		■ Interpersonal/intergroup conflicts
		■ Poor performance on tests and assessments

IV
Using Cross-Cultural Communication to Improve Relationships

In culturally diverse communities, differences may be expected to exist in the communication styles of students, teachers, parents, administrators and noninstructional staff. Perhaps the most important reason for educators to understand cross-cultural communication is to improve their relations with the diverse groups of students and parents they will encounter. If left ignored, communication differences will inevitably lead to various types of miscommunication which may lead, in turn, to conflicts which erode school climate and cause certain groups of students — usually African American and other nonwhite students to feel unwelcome.

The fact that these circumstances occur is a tragedy, of course. The greater tragedy, however, is that educators do not always know how to eliminate or minimize this type of discord.

Tactics for Removing Cross-Cultural Communication Barriers

Once we have established the prerequisites for understanding communication issues, we should then seek to remove cross-cultural

communication barriers from the school environment. The major tactics that might be employed for this purpose fall under two categories:

- Removing language which appears to stereotype students; and
- Reducing violations of cultural rules during discussions and conversations.

With respect to removing stereotypical language, the following strategies might be useful:

— **Be aware of words, images and situations that suggest that all or most members of a racial group are the same.**
Example: "Why can't Joe ever be on time?"
"He's African American, isn't he?"

— **Avoid using qualifiers that reinforce racial and ethnic stereotypes.**
Example: "The articulate African American student" implies that African American students typically have low verbal skills.

— **Avoid racial identification except when it is essential to communication.**
Example: "Judy, an outgoing student" is preferable to "Judy, an outgoing African American female student."

— **Be aware of possible negative implications of color symbolism and usage that could offend people or reinforce bias.**
Example: Terms such as "black magic" or "black market" can be offensive.

— **Avoid language that has questionable racial or ethnic connotations.**
Example: Phrases such as "culturally deprived," "culturally disadvantaged" and "you people" have racist overtones.

With respect to changing communicative behaviors which violate the cultural rules of others, the following strategies may be useful:

— **Be aware of rules for attentiveness during conversation.**
Example: The constant maintenance of eye contact while listening during a conversation often violates a conversational rule in working-class African American and Hispanic cultures.

— **Be aware of rules regarding the distance between speakers during conversation.**
Example: In some cultures, speakers stand close enough to touch often. In other cultures, distance is maintained to denote respect.

— **Be aware that objects, characters and symbols may reflect different beliefs or values for different groups.**

Example: The confederate flag and Uncle Remus stories may offend African Americans because they reflect the culture of slavery and the Old South.

— **Be aware that cultures may vary in what they consider humorous or taboo.**

Example: Ethnic humor is often perceived by many groups as evidence of racial prejudice. Discussion of in-group cultural rules and behaviors with outsiders is considered taboo within many cultures.

— **Be aware of different rules for taking turns during conversations.**

Example: African American children frequently perceive "breaking in" to reinforce or disagree with another's point to be perfectly permissible, indeed desirable.

— **Cultures may use different standards for loudness, speed of delivery, silence, attentiveness and time to respond to another's point.**

Example: Many Native American societies place high value on contemplation and tend, therefore, to feel little responsibility to make immediate responses during conversation.

— **Be aware of different cultural rules for entering into conversations in progress.**

Example: African American students tend to consider conversations as private between recognized participants. Therefore, anyone, including the teacher, who "butts in" is viewed as an eavesdropper and rebuked.

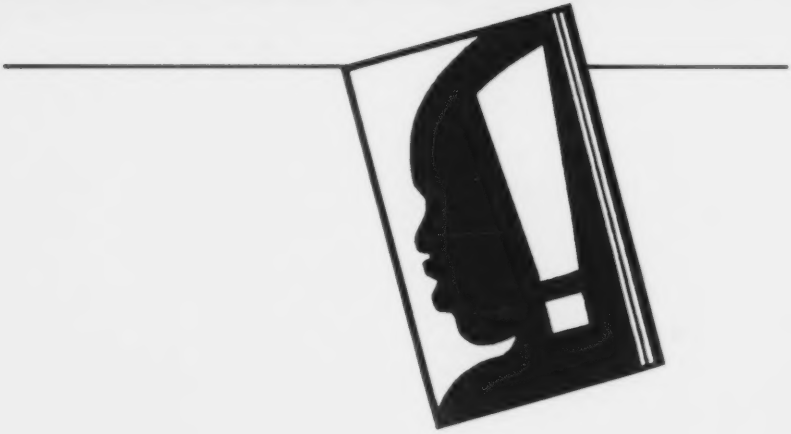
One way to improve relationships across cultural lines, particularly in the upper grades, is to develop a unit on "Communicating with One Another." The purpose of such a unit would be to teach students how to communicate more effectively across cultural lines and how to address and negotiate differences.

It is also useful for teachers to brainstorm with one another on how to remove communication barriers. In addition, a well designed staff development program can lead to better relations among staff and generate effective cross-cultural communication activities for the classroom.

It can also be useful for teachers to ask parents to identify sources of miscommunication and socially offensive behavior or language. Parents may be asked to suggest ways that school personnel can improve communication with students, adults and the communities.

While schools have a responsibility to teach students the behavioral codes of the society at large and to expect students to adhere to them, they have a similar responsibility to reduce culturally induced discipline problems and to avoid misinterpreting cultural differences as behavioral problems.

Patton's (1986) research on cross-cultural communication behaviors and their relationship to discipline problems at the junior high school level provides excellent reading on this topic. Other readings are Gappa and Pearce's (1983) *Removing Bias: Guidelines for Student-Faculty Communication*; Kochman's (1981) *Black and White Styles in Conflict*; and Pickens' (1982) *Without Bias: A Guidebook for Nondiscriminatory Communication*.



V

Teaching Standard English To Speakers Of Nonstandard English Dialects

There is little disagreement that educational success and expanded social and career options are linked to competence in standard English. An alarming percentage of students who speak nonstandard English are failing to acquire standard English, the language of education. Moreover, many students who do acquire standard English do so while being taught to reject the language of their home, community and peers. In the process, they are denied an effective element of social solidarity, which is an important element of cultural heritage.

Why Do Nonstandard English-Speaking Children Fail to Acquire Standard English?

Many arguments have been advanced to explain the low achievement levels of nonstandard English-speaking children, particularly African American children, in acquiring oral competence in standard English. The most tenable argument suggests that the philosophy, assumptions and traditional classroom methodologies employed in language arts education have failed because they have been prescriptive and corrective and have focused too much on language structure rather than on communicative competence (Taylor, 1985). Moreover, traditional teaching methodologies have not typically been culturally sensitive,

nor have they made use of indigenous, nonstandard dialects. These significant deficiencies are probably due to naiveté, or to negative attitudes toward language variations by language arts teachers.

Toward More Effective Teaching of Standard English

In recent years, a number of educators have begun to devise and implement instructional strategies which take into account the various language systems that students bring into the classroom. In general, these strategies are based on modern sociolinguistic learning theory and on established principles of second language teaching.

In 1981, California became the first state to recognize the importance of indigenous dialects in teaching standard English. Focusing primarily on the language of African American nonstandard English-speaking children, California's State Board of Public Instruction stated in part:

> Many Black learners come to the school setting speaking a language that is linguistically different from standard English. The language they speak is an integral part of the Afro-American culture . . . It is a unique language which serves a uniquely rich culture. However, the school setting and that of the larger American society, including the economic and commercial communities, represent another linguistic sphere in which the student must learn to move and speak successfully. To the extent that the young student fluently communicates in either language, he increases his opportunities in both realms . . .
>
> Therefore, to provide proficiency in English to California students who are speakers of Black Language and to provide equal educational opportunities for these students, it is recommended that the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education hereby recognize:
>
> That structured oral language practice in standard English should be provided on an ongoing basis.
>
> That special program strategies are required to address the needs of speakers of Black language.
>
> That parents and the general public should be informed of implications of educational strategies to address the linguistic needs of Black students.

Teaching Standard English from a Cultural Perspective

Teaching the standard language from a cultural perspective differs from the traditional language education approach in that it does not blame the victim. Standard English instruction from a cultural

perspective does not presuppose the devaluation or elimination of a learner's indigenous language as a pre-requisite for learning. It recognizes that students need to retain their home dialect where its use is appropriate.

Several major requirements for teaching standard English from a cultural perspective follow. Instruction should:

- Focus on both the structure of language, and on how to communicate;
- Maintain an oral basis;
- Concentrate on the structure of language, situational language requirements and language as a vehicle for thinking;
- Be linked to clearly defined long-term goals; and
- Be integrated across the curriculum.

A successful culturally based standard English program recognizes that learning proceeds in an orderly way from the introduction of a particular aspect of language through its mastery. The model which has enjoyed the widest use and greatest success was designed in the late 1970s by the San Diego Oral Language Program. It has been used with modifications in Standard English as a Second Dialect (SESD) programs in Dallas, Texas, and in Richmond and Oakland in California. The model lists several necessary steps for learning a new linguistic system while preserving the student's indigenous system. The model includes the following eight steps:

- *Developing positive attitudes toward one's own language.* The first and continuing job of the teacher is to counteract negative evaluations of the students' indigenous language. Lessons on the historical development of various dialects and on language diversity are useful in accomplishing this goal.
- *Developing awareness of language varieties.* Students develop a sensitivity to the various forms of a given language via stories in standard English, poems in different dialects, and records, tapes or video recordings of various speakers. At this stage, specific likenesses and differences are emphasized.
- *Recognizing, labeling and contrasting dialects.* Students learn to recognize differences in various languages and dialects and to associate specific features with each linguistic system.
- *Comprehending meanings.* Students learn to recognize differences in meanings and intentions when an idea is translated from one language or dialect to another.
- *Recognizing situational communication requirements.* Students determine the types of speech appropriate to various situations.
- *Producing in structured situations.* Students practice producing successive approximations of standard English. Initially, students follow a model at this stage, e.g., a script, choral reading or poem.
- *Producing in controlled situations.* Students receive instruction and practice in producing standard English without a model, e.g., role-playing or retelling a story.
- *Matching the language to the situation.* Students practice speaking appropriately in real life, spontaneous situations leading to communicative competence.

Before beginning to teach standard English from a cultural perspective, the teacher and school need a clear language arts philosophy which embraces modern principles of ethnology, sociolinguistics and second language instruction. The philosophy and assumptions statement developed by the Richmond Unified School District in California is a good example of what schools and teachers may usefully adopt. (See Appendix I.)

Finally, before beginning program implementation, the teacher and school community must become thoroughly familiar with the following general principles of second dialect instruction:

- Instruction should be preceded by a non-biased assessment of each learner's knowledge of his or her first dialect and of the second dialect.
- Students must feel positive toward their own dialects.
- Students must want to learn another dialect. If motivation is not present, the teacher must help students discover the advantages of acquiring the second dialect.
- Instruction must consider the language goals of students, their families and their communities.
- Instruction must take into account cultural values associated with learning and teaching.
- Instruction must accommodate the preferred cognitive learning styles of the students. Some children prefer a field independent (object oriented) cognitive style. Others prefer a field dependent (social oriented) cognitive style. Both are valid, however, schools tend to be more oriented toward the field independent style. See Appendix II for a summary of these two preferred cognitive styles.
- Both the teacher and students must be able to contrast the linguistic and communicative rules of the existing and targeted dialects.
- Linguistic and communicative features of the existing dialect should be compared with those of the targeted dialect.
- Instruction should be integrated with students' experiences.
- Both the teacher and students must believe that it is possible to acquire a second dialect.

What Is a Good Approach to Implementing Standard English as a Second Dialect (SESD) Programs?

Minimum standards must be established for evaluating the validity of culturally based SESD curricula and teaching/learning strategies. An SESD program should:

- Permit students to demonstrate their listening skills by summarizing, responding, paraphrasing or following directions.
- Allow varied and frequent opportunities for students to communicate with each other.
- Provide students opportunities to summarize, analyze or evaluate oral or written communication completed by themselves, their peers or the teacher.

- Provide students opportunities to listen and respond appropriately to the teacher, their classmates or audio-visual materials.
- Allow students to use speech for different purposes in a variety of situations, e.g., persuading, informing, imagining, questioning or asserting.
- Teach students how to evaluate the effectiveness of their own communication.
- Stress that learning new speech patterns is linked to short-term and long-term goals.
- Underscore the importance of situation, audience or topic during communication.
- Indicate that oral communication activities will be included throughout the total curriculum.
- Have a clear language and communication focus.

The Richmond and Los Angeles school districts in California and Dade County Public Schools in Miami, Florida, have developed lessons and support materials for implementing SESD programs. Names and addresses of information sources on SESD programs are presented in Appendix III.

How Can Aides and Parents Help?

The teaching of a second dialect cannot be solely the responsibility of the classroom teacher, no more than it can be limited to the language arts classroom. Teacher aides and parents can support the instructional process and assist children's language development in general and SESD instruction in particular by:

- Encouraging children to speak in a variety of situations and before many audiences;
- Establishing talking as a frequent, enjoyable and secure activity;
- Modeling and expanding students' speech into language appropriate for the topic, situation and audience;
- Pointing out what language and communicative behaviors are appropriate as situations occur;
- Discouraging teasing about speech;
- Not over-correcting students' speech;
- Linking corrections of speech to the situation;
- Providing the school and teachers with examples of speech used in the home and community to incorporate in instruction, assessment and teacher training;
- Reinforcing writing or reading activities with activities that include talking;
- Providing an abundance of verbal stimuli for students irrespective of language or communication competencies;
- Encouraging students to engage in conversations with a variety of people and on a variety of subjects; and
- Encouraging students to recount their experiences in narrative form as often as possible and before a variety of audiences.

VI

Communication Differences, Test Performance and Educational Placement

Virtually all tests and assessment procedures used in schools and classrooms require students to manipulate information using tools of communication. Often these tests and procedures presume competence in standard English and in the communication rules of the educated segment of society.

Much discussion and research in the last decade have focused on test bias and on culturally fair methods for assessing students' behavior and knowledge. Indeed, a number of court cases and legislative initiatives have prohibited the use of culturally discriminatory tests and assessment procedures, e.g., Public Law 94-142: the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

Culturally biased tests can adversely affect students from many cultural groups, particularly those who do not speak standard English. For example, these tests can contribute to:

- Lowered expectations of student performance;
- Negative attitudes toward low-performing students;
- Lowered self-esteem and expectations by students;
- Lowered expectations of student performance by parents;
- Inappropriate placement in special education and speech/language therapy programs; and
- Lowered probability of placement in talented and gifted programs.

While classroom teachers do not typically administer standardized tests, they do use assessment procedures in classrooms. Also, because students are placed in classes on the basis of standardized test results

administered by others, teachers' expectations of students are often influenced by such test results. Furthermore, teachers typically take part in the referral and evaluation process to determine whether a student needs special education or related services. For these reasons, and others, teachers should understand test and assessment bias and should know what to do about it.

Sources of Bias in Tests and Assessment Procedures

In general, teachers should be aware of seven major sources of test and assessment bias. They are presented with examples in Table VI below:

TABLE VI
Sources of Communication Biases and Communication-Related Biases in Tests and Assessment Procedures

Situational Bias	Mismatches between examiner and examinee regarding the societal rules of language, e.g., sarcastic answers to obvious questions. (*Examiner:* What time does the clock say? *Examinee:* Everybody knows clocks don't talk.)
Directions Bias	Test directions involve linguistic complexities unfamiliar to the examinee, e.g., "None of the following is true except . . ." is incorrectly interpreted as "all of the following are true except . . ."
Value Bias	Examinee is required to exhibit a particular moral or ethical preference, e.g., "One who is dishonest is a) an offender, b) a politician, c) an ambassador, d) an officer." One might presume each choice to be reasonable.
Linguistic Bias	Test presumes that examinee is competent in standard English, e.g., "Which sentence is ungrammatical? a) They saw Rose. b) You done it wrong. c) My brother has never eaten. d) Don't use too much." A nonstandard English speaker might see each as grammatical.
Format Bias	Test procedures or requirements are inconsistent with examinee's cognitive and/or learning style, e.g., "Select the *best* answer to the following . . ." One might consider answers to be either right or wrong, thereby no such thing as a best answer if all are correct.

Cultural Misinterpretation	Examiner erroneously interprets cultural practices of examinee, e.g., a child who exhibits silence as a natural reaction to an unfamiliar adult examiner is diagnosed as nonverbal, or a child who does not respond quickly to test items is labeled unknowledgeable.
Stimulus Bias	Examiner presents stimuli rich in objects and analytical materials to an examinee who prefers a field dependent cognitive style, and is more likely to be responsive to materials rich in social content.

Teachers need to be aware of how communicative factors can influence test performance and of the impact their evaluations of students' performance can have. For example, if students fail to understand test directions, they may respond incorrectly to a whole series of questions. If they are not competent in standard English, students may answer questions incorrectly because of inaccurate analyses of their content. If their cognitive learning style is field-dependent or synthesizing rather than field-independent or analytical, they may have difficulty with formats which seek best answers to questions when all answers contain an element of truth. Furthermore, students may hold different values than those assumed by the teacher or they may obey different communicative rules for verbal behavior in the social situation which test questions address. Finally, the teacher may misinterpret a student's culturally based communicative style and draw erroneous conclusions about the student's knowledge.

What to Do About Assessment Bias

It is not reasonable to expect that teachers will develop their own culturally fair tests and assessment procedures. However, teachers can contribute to a more positive assessment environment for culturally diverse students. According to Taylor and Payne (1983), teachers can address the assessment bias issue in the following ways:

- Ensure that all students understand the test directions.
- Ensure that the test does not presume linguistic knowledge that students may not have unless, of course, the test is designed to assess knowledge of a specific language or dialect.
- The test should not require students to articulate values which they do not share.
- The test should be compatible with the preferred learning styles of the student.
- Situational and interactional constraints must be considered from a cultural perspective in evaluating oral communication behavior on tests.

- In the scoring or interpretation of test performance, the student's response style must be considered.
- When referring students for special testing or placement in special education, be certain that results of evaluations are not flawed by cultural differences in behavior and language.
- Do not include culturally discriminatory items on tests.
- Accept as correct those test answers which are considered valid within the student's culture, even if the particular answer is not listed in the manual as being correct.
- Consider two scores for tests which have a cultural component, a culturally unadjusted score and a culturally adjusted score.
- Support efforts to decrease reliance on standardized tests for assessments, using alternative assessment procedures where possible and appropriate.
- Support efforts to involve parents and the community in assessing test findings.

New standardized tests and assessment procedures are needed which are culturally valid. Until those tests are available, teachers should be skeptical of the results of most standardized tests administered to culturally and linguistically diverse children and should exercise caution in using these results for making placement decisions.

VII
Communication Differences and Discipline Problems

Most educators would agree that schools have a responsibility to establish an educational environment that encourages positive learning experiences for all students. Many would also claim that schools should be expected to teach students the social behaviors which are considered acceptable by the society at large, as well as the sanctions which are likely to be applied when acceptable standards are violated. In light of these dual and sometimes conflicting imperatives, the disproportionate suspension and expulsion rates for minority students throughout the nation are cause for considerable concern. In 1979, for example, the National Advisory Committee on Black Higher Education and Black Universities and Colleges reported that while students from minority ethnic groups comprised approximately 25 percent of the nation's public school population, they comprised 40 percent of those suspended. A 1982 Fact Sheet on Institutional Racism revealed that while 16 percent of the nation's students were African American, they comprised 29 percent of all suspensions and 27 percent of all expulsions.

In a 1984 report by the Minority Relations Monitoring Committee of Montgomery County, Maryland, it was stated that:

> . . .Nowhere is the school system more vulnerable to the charge of being "unfair" in dealing with its students than in the manner in which it manages student behavior . . . Clearly the difference in suspension rates of White and African American students in many of the senior high schools is so broad as to constitute a serious threat to the opportunity for an equal education.

Many reasons are given to explain the high rate of discipline problems among minority students, particularly African Americans. Some blame the institution; others blame the student or victim.

Institutional Explanations	Victim-Focused Explanations
■ Negative school climate	■ Low student motivation
■ Racial and ethnic bias	■ Cultural disrespect for rules
■ Inadequate classroom management	■ Unfamiliarity with rules of school and the mainstream society
■ Inappropriate educational placements	■ Lackadaisical discipline standards in student's home and community
■ Inappropriate teacher expectations	
■ Differential applications of rules for student conduct	

Before drawing any conclusions relative to the cause of the high rate of discipline problems and suspension and expulsion rates for non-white students, it would be useful to explore the major types of student behaviors that teachers report as being unacceptable. Mitchell (1983) reports that five of the nine most frequently reported behaviors involve cultural and communicative issues, e.g., verbal threats, classroom disruptions and disrespect.

You may recall that the claim was made that every human encounter — positive or negative — reflects cultural assumptions upon which communication rules are based. This claim leads us to advance two important hypotheses about cross-cultural communication and school discipline problems:

- Discord is inevitable among students when they have different perceptions of the rules for communication and what is appropriate and acceptable behavior.
- Teachers and other school personnel are more likely to perceive students' behaviors, including their communicative behaviors, as being disruptive and discordant when those behaviors diverge from the norms of the school.

Schools reflect culture, mainly the culture of the dominant society. Patton (1986) claims that schools are a microculture with a distinct system of preferred and required communicative behaviors. This culture, she asserts, is more congruent with some cultures than with others. Typically, it reflects the values and norms of the immediate community. Students with cultural and communicative norms which are incongruous with the schools' norms are more likely, she argues, to engage in unacceptable behavior.

Sources of Cultural and Communicative Incongruities Which Lead to Discipline Problems

Research suggests that several categories of communicative behavior are considered unacceptable in many, if not most, school environments. While some of these unacceptable behaviors do not result in sanctions, many do. Examples of behaviors which almost always are punished include:

- Challenging the teacher's authority;
- Using obscene language in class;
- Using obscene language with other students;
- Not listening quietly when the teacher is presenting a lesson;
- Moving around the room when the teacher is presenting a lesson;
- Interrupting another student;
- Seeking assistance from another student on a test;
- Not waiting until one person has finished speaking before taking a turn;
- Ignoring the teacher's directions;
- Responding in a loud voice;
- Socializing in class;
- Being late to class;
- Not walking away during discord;
- Using physical means to settle a conflict; and
- Showing emotion during discord.

Each of the behaviors listed above may be in conflict with communication rules for a given cultural group. The teacher's task is to determine through reading, discussion and observation which perceived behaviors could have a different cultural significance for the groups represented in the classroom.

What Do We Do About Cultural and Communicative Sources of Student Misbehavior?

While the majority of students, including those from minority groups, learn, accept and conform to the rules of schools, cultural differences may play an important role in apparent discipline problems in the school. These differences cannot account for all student misbehavior, yet many discipline problems may result from students' failure to know, accept or conform to school norms which are either divergent or incongruous with their own cultural or communicative norms.

School personnel should be open to examining the causes of perceived misbehavior in the classroom. In those cases where school or classroom norms are intolerant of cultural differences, revisions of school norms would seem to be most appropriate. Where school norms are generally congruent with norms across the cultural spectrum of the school community, the school has a responsibility to teach those norms to the

student. One cannot expect that all students come to school with prior knowledge or acceptance of school norms.

In any case, schools, like all institutions, must establish reasonable rules of conduct, but these rules should be sensitive to the cultural assumptions, values and communication expectations of the total school community.

The following activities are useful in considering cross-cultural communication issues for addressing school discipline problems:

- Devise a plan for teaching all students the acceptable communicative behaviors of the school and the justification for them.
- Devise a plan for teaching students the nature, origin and need for rules to govern school and classroom communicative behavior, while simultaneously recognizing the validity of other behaviors in different settings, such as students' homes or communities.
- Determine which school or classroom norms may be in conflict with cultural or communicative norms of specific cultural groups.
- Engage in discussions with colleagues on how school or classroom norms might be revised to make them more sensitive to the various cultural groups in the school community.

VIII
Summary

This booklet has reviewed several basic concepts relating to culture, communication and language and has shown how communication issues affect human behavior in general and school life in particular. Also, suggestions have been made relative to instruction, assessment, interpersonal relationships and discipline.

You might now re-take the introductory test on page 4. Any change reflected in your score will give you a measure of what you have learned about culture and communication.

To put into use what you have learned, consider working with your colleagues to:

- Integrate cross-cultural communication topics and materials into the curriculum;
- Educate those who administer standardized tests that different styles of communication are used by various cultural groups;
- Review and revise classroom tests to eliminate cultural bias; and
- Address cross-cultural communication issues in all phases of school life.

Suggestions for classroom utilization have been made throughout the booklet. The rest is up to you. Cross-cultural communication is an ongoing process. Mistakes are inevitable, but sensitivity to cultural and communication issues can enhance the quality of education for all students.

Appendix I

Philosophy and Assumptions of Richmond, California, Standard English Program (Abstracted)

Effective communication is a basic skill to be mastered by all students. Each student enters school with a well developed language system which should be respected and utilized, where appropriate, by the classroom teacher in planning and implementing standard English instruction.

Students need to learn standard English for use in those situations where it is appropriate, while at the same time, they are reinforced of the value of their home language.

Assumptions

I. On the Role of Oral Communication in Education

Learning in the school setting is dependent upon communication-—spoken, written and/or nonverbal. In general, oral communication serves as the foundation for all other types of linguistic behavior in and out of school.

II. On Standard English

In a heterogeneous linguistic and cultural society such as the United States, a common ground of communication must be established for many types of information exchange. In the United States, standard English serves that purpose. Competence in this dialect provides an individual with a wider range of academic, esthetic, social, business and professional options than would otherwise be available. One of the responsibilities of schools is to teach all students to read, write, speak and auditorially comprehend standard English in situations, topics, disciplines and audiences where it is required. The acquisition of these skills is expected to provide students with a necessary tool for academic and/or career success.

III. On Home and Community Languages

The need for a standard language as a unifying force in a heterogeneous society does not diminish, in any way, the value of the languages and dialects of the various cultural groups within a local community. These indigenous language forms not only serve as an integral cultural and historical link for all groups, they also

provide an important means of expression and creativity for individual speakers. DISRESPECT AND NON-RECOGNITION OF HOME LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS CAN LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEGATIVE SELF-CONCEPTS, POOR MORALE AND LOW MOTIVATION IN LEARNERS.

IV. On the Characteristics of a Culturally Based Oral Communication Program

A culturally based oral communication program recognizes and celebrates linguistic diversity while teaching students standard English. It teaches verbal and nonverbal communication which meets the demands of different audiences, situations and topics. Instruction is sensitive to the aspirations and needs of the learner. It respects and builds on the culture, language and distinct learning styles the child brings to school and responds to the need to transmit specific skills and competencies. The curriculum must be based on a sound instructional model which cuts across all phases of the curriculum and school life and utilizes, where permissible, educational materials which are culturally familiar and valid. Finally, the program must contain ongoing external self-evaluations of both the learner and the teacher.

Appendix II

Some Attributes of Field Independent and Field Dependent Cognitive Styles

(Adapted from Ramirez and Castaneda, 1974).

Student Characteristics	Field Independent Cognitive Style	Field Dependent Cognitive Style
Overall characteristics	■ Focuses on parts, rather than on the whole	■ Focuses on the whole, rather than parts
	■ Is reality oriented to objects and analyses of discrete elements	■ Is reality oriented to relationships and social attributes
	■ Demonstrates topic centered narrative style	■ Demonstrates topic associating narrative style
Relationship to peers:	■ Prefers to work independently	■ Likes to work with others to achieve a common goal
	■ Likes to compete and gain individual recognition	■ Likes to assist others
	■ Is task oriented and inattentive to social environment when working	■ Is sensitive to feelings and opinions of others
Personal relationship to teacher:	■ Rarely seeks physical contact with teacher	■ Openly expresses positive feelings for teacher
	■ Interacts with teacher to tasks at hand	■ Asks questions about teacher's tastes and personal experiences; seeks to become like teacher
Instructional relationship to teacher:	■ Likes to try new tasks without teacher's help	■ Seeks guidance and demonstration from teacher
	■ Is impatient to begin tasks; likes to finish first	■ Seeks rewards which strengthen relationship with teacher
	■ Seeks nonsocial rewards	■ Is highly motivated when working individually with teacher

Student Characteristics	Field Independent Cognitive Style	Field Dependent Cognitive Style
Characteristics of curriculum that facilitate learning:	■ Details of concepts are emphasized; parts have meanings of their own ■ Mathematics and science concepts are emphasized ■ Emphasis placed on discovery approach	■ Performance objectives and global aspects of curriculum are carefully explained ■ Concepts are presented in humanized or story format ■ Concepts are related to personal interests and experiences

Appendix III

Information Sources on SESD Programs

California

Compensatory Education Services
California Department of Public Instruction
721 Capital Mall, 2nd Floor
Sacramento, California 95814
(916) 445-2590

Language Arts Programs Division
San Diego City Public Schools
Education Center
4100 Normal Street
San Diego, CA 92103
(619) 293-8531

Proficiency in English Program (PEP)
Los Angeles Unified School District
1320 W. 3rd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 625-6684

Standard English Program
Oakland Unified School District
314 East 10th Street
Oakland, California 94606
(415) 836-8269

Standard English Program
Richmond Unified School District
1108 Bissel Avenue
Richmond, California 94802
(415) 234-3825

Florida

Office of Bilingual Education
Dade County Public School District
1415 N.E. 2nd Street
Miami, Florida 33132
(305) 376-1454

Texas

Dallas Independent School District
3700 Ross Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75204
(214) 824-1620

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Emphasizing educationally sound strategies that enhance the opportunities of a diverse student population, the Center provides the following types of assistance in each of its program areas:

- system-wide assessment
- long-term planning and technical assistance
- data analysis and program evaluation
- administrative consultations
- training-of-trainers workshops
- staff development programs
- multicultural curriculum
- dissemination of information and publications

Sheryl Denbo, Ph.D., Executive Director

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